



Veggies on Wheels



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NEWSLETTER OF PFENNING'S ORGANIC FOOD BOX

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"Veggies on Wheels" (edited by Wolfgang W.) appears about once/month. Biweekly or irregular customers may receive the latest issue at a later date.

Dear Pfenning's Food Box Community,

After making it through some of the coldest days of the year, we are all happily welcoming the milder temperatures. It was quite the challenge to deliver all your Food Baskets during the **deep freeze** when temperatures plummeted down to the low minus 20s and lower. Thank you to all of you who heeded our advice to help us ensure your groceries don't freeze by leaving out your coolers, blankets and sleeping bags or allowing us to leave your order in your garage or enclosed porch. Very helpful and very much appreciated!

Newsletter and Plastic Feedback

In our last Newsletter we had brought to your attention that we have **gone digital with our Newsletter**. We didn't receive much feedback, either negative or positive. The direst reaction came from a long-standing and faithful customer in Stratford who did express his family's sadness about this development... and likened it to the passing of Stuart McLean. We did feel a tinge of honour welling up, being placed in the ranks with this popular Canadian public figure. May anyone else feeling a similar pang of melancholy as a result of the passing of our Newsletter hard copy be reminded that we can still exceptionally provide you with the cherished actual printed Newsletter if you so desire. We are already doing that for those few customers who do not have internet.

In response to an earlier query we put out there regarding our customers' feelings about using less plastic packaging in our Food Boxes, we also got feedback from exactly one customer (actually our dear friend from Stratford). He was not so much concerned about the use of plastic, saying that there was not any evidence that wrapping food in **unheated plastic** may cause any significant contamination. He would prefer retaining the freshness of the vegetables rather than cut down on the use of plastic. His impression was that we may end up ingesting more toxins by eating the outside of the food exposed to bacteria in the air, coupled with a loss in nutrition. He maintains that their local grocery store won't use plastic and all the produce they sell is limp and the greens all dried out. Not really a prospect we are excited about. Being open to new ideas, he offered a suggestion that he observed in Italy where they apparently store produce in wooden containers full of sand. The practical implications for our delivery side of things, however, keep our enthusiasm in check.

In our pre-packed Food Baskets we continue to offer the possibility to pack your fruits and veggies with the least amount of plastic possible. So if you request it, you will receive root veggies such as potatoes, beets, turnips and the like right in your box – not in a plastic bag. In order to keep any greens or items that dry out quickly fresh we still put them in a plastic bag for you. There's our challenge: finding a happy balance between minimizing the use of plastic packaging and delivering everything to you as fresh as possible. We're on it!

The idea of reducing or eliminating packaging waste has become cutting edge. Just recently we saw a report on no-waste markets opening up across the country. The idea is for the customers to bring along their own clean reusable containers to reduce or eliminate single-use packaging. Great idea! We have also not been giving out plastic bags at the Store for a long time. We are glad to see that what we have been encouraging our customers to do for years when shopping at Pfenning's Organic is beginning to catch on.

Guernsey Milk Forced Break

We just learned that there will be **no Guernsey Milk processing** this week due to a washing failure caused by the extreme cold. Milk processing will resume on Monday, February 11th. Sorry for all you Guernsey customers. We will be unable to fill your demand coming week. Check out their post on **Instagram** here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BtZgbJggefZ/>. We do still have enough Guernsey Milk in stock to fill this week's demand. **Eby Manor**, hope you get everything up and running smoothly. We love your milk!





It's Root Veggie Time

Yawn... As if you hadn't heard this now for the umpteenth time. Especially you **Local Box people** out there are well aware of this – and still do not seem to be deterred by all the tubers, roots and spuds, judging by the popularity the Local Basket is still enjoying at this time.

It's February now and the at the Pfenning's Farm we have oodles of root veggies in storage – stored covered in the dirt that it grew in (*the Italians are on to something storing some produce in sand to keep things moist and fresh*). An update on that: **local Pfenning's Carrots** in 2 lb and 5 lb bags are done for the season. Juicing Carrots in 25 lbs bags will still be available for a while. We still have a limited amount of **Chantenay Carrots** from Dianne at Golden Acres Farm. Not really a root veggie, but local **Squash** has also come to an

end now. You will see the **LAST LOCAL Squash** in the Local and Wild Baskets this week. They may have minor imperfections and are priced accordingly. Use them up quickly – and enjoy them!

Respect to all of you out there who live with the season and embrace this rooty time of the year, making the best of it with tasty and imaginative meals. Now, if you happen to be "outrooted" and a bit at a loss of what to do with all these treasures of the hibernating season, you will be happy to hear that we have revived the well-liked **Soup & Stew Vegetables** – see them here in our Catalogue: <https://tinyurl.com/y9hf2zzz>. There's even a recipe from Almut to go along with this: <https://tinyurl.com/ya8xt7qh>. Absolutely delicious and very comforting!

Also, to clarify the term local ... we also consider veggies coming from **Quebec LOCAL** at this time. It might seem like a stretch, but we are happy to see veggies such as Belgian Endives, Vine Tomatoes and Cucumbers coming from our next door neighbour and not from anywhere clear across the continent.

Farmers Feed Cities

A couple of weeks ago, **Almut** spoke her piece in her weekly **STORE NEWS and SPECIALS** update – you can subscribe to it here:

<https://www.pfenningorganic.ca/newsletters/subscribe.cfm>. We and a lot of customers thought that Almut had spoken well. Here is what she had to say for all of you to consider:

"Farmers feed Cities." Most people have seen the sticker with this slogan.

At this time of the year, farmers in Canada are flipping through the pages of various seed catalogues. They are dreaming of what to grow (*and earn their living while doing so*) for the city folks in the coming season. Their intent and focus on success is 100%.

But will the weather and growing conditions cooperate? Will there be enough rain? Too much rain? Too hot? Too cold? Too many pests? New plant maladies? Time will tell at harvest time - and beyond.

Now jumping to California's and Mexico's Celery fields. Those farmers planned out their Celery harvest many months ago, just like our Ontario farmers would have. As you might be aware, Celery is a very high-priced commodity at this time. We seem to run into this most every winter - one or the other produce price skyrocketing incomprehensibly. At this point not even available to buy. Again, weather and growing conditions are to blame.

Suggestion: Let's be patient, stay flexible and just opt to eat another vegetable (maybe a local cabbage?) instead. And maybe send a brief thought to the farmers and farm workers over in California who also wants to feed the cities of North America... and feed their families at the same time.

I have yet to meet a farmer who is not very serious and dedicated about the crops they are growing.

Let the stew bubble on the stove – Almut

Hope you all enjoy February,

Wolfgang

**FARMERS
FEED
CITIES**